

INTRODUCTION

The Five Year Plan for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) sets forth the mission statement, needs, outcomes, evaluation plan and programs for administering the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands LSTA program during 2003-2007. It describes the involvement of the community and librarians and the communication procedures that will be used in the implementation of the LSTA program in the CNMI.

Statement of Need

The Commonwealth of the Northern Marinas Islands is a chain of islands in the Pacific Ocean. It has three islands that are significantly populated: Saipan, Tinian and Rota. The 2000 Census recorded a CNMI population of 69,221, a more than 60 per cent increase since 1990. The residents of the CNMI are from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Chamorros and Carolinians comprise the island's indigenous population and there is a significant population of other Pacific Islanders from Micronesia and Polynesia. There is a large population of residents of Asian ethnic origin. Filipinos, including contract workers, are the largest single ethnic group. There are large numbers of garment workers from China. Additional groups include Koreans, Japanese, Bangladeshis, Thais and Sri Lankans and a small population of U.S. Mainlanders.

The Commonwealth economy has been suffering for the past several years. The GDP per capita is only a little more than a third of that in the United States leaving a large percentage of the population in a difficult economic situation. The tourism, government, and garment industries generate most of the jobs in the CNMI along with a struggling private sector. Tourism has declined as a result of the depressed Asian economy, the September 11th attacks and most recently the SARS epidemic. The garment industry has been declining sharply largely due to the planned elimination of United States textile tariffs coming up in 2005. With sharply reduced tax revenues, the Commonwealth government has instituted a program of austerity with no end in sight.

The educational system in the CNMI is still developing and lags behind U.S. standards. It has been suffering due to lack of funding and is less able to provide for those with greater and special needs. It has many bilingual students and many students for whom English is a second language. Many parents of school children in Saipan do not have a high school diploma and there weren't even any high schools at all on Tinian and Rota until the early 1990s. The library system and other literacy agencies are crucial to providing additional educational opportunity.

CNMI Public Libraries

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library on Saipan functions as the CNMI State Library. It is a fairly modern facility that was built with private funds in 1991. The library's Information Technology Center serves the entire island with only 16 public access computers. Currently nine full-time staff members are employed at the central library, including two librarians. Joeten-Kiyu is now 12 years old and in need of repairs and expansion in order to continue to serve more than 80 per cent of the CNMI population. The Tinian Public Library has been in operation since 1997 and construction of a new branch library building with FY2003 Community Development Block Grant funds will begin in Fall 2003. Since 1997, it has employed one professional staff member, an MLS librarian. A new branch library on Rota was completed in 2002 and is in the process of being prepared for opening in 2004.

Each island has different needs resulting from these building projects. The new Rota Public Library needs computers, materials, furnishings and staff in order to open in 2004. Tinian Public Library also needs materials and additional staff to meet increasing patron demand and to be prepared for the opening of the new building. Both the Rota and Tinian Libraries need to be connected to a CNMI-wide network in order to make services available on Saipan available to patrons serviced by branch libraries. In addition all three libraries have needs in common. One continuing need on all three islands is materials. The collection ratio of books to resident served is a very low 0.6 per capita. The CNMI needs to approach 3 books per capita in order to adequately serve its residents. Additional staff, equipment and materials are necessary for outreach programs to children, senior citizens, remote islands and other underserved populations. It is essential that each CNMI library operate an Information Technology Center with broadband services, create website and complete a CNMI wide communications network. The state library has suffered from a high staff turnover. There is desperate need to train professional librarians and technicians especially indigenous Native Americans to ensure an adequately educated and credentialed staff in the future.

The CNMI library system is funded by both local government sources and Federal grants. On all three islands, the leaders and the community have demonstrated their commitments to libraries by making new library construction a priority. Despite the economic downturn and limited government resources the local governments have contributed substantial funds to the creation of new libraries, collections, and maintaining current library staff. Additional assistance is crucial to the continued development and automation of the libraries and creation of a viable library system. The LSTA Five-Year Plan is essential to continue the progress made in the past twelve years in the construction and development of libraries and patron service.

Overview of Needs Assessment, Goals, Evaluation Plan and Programs

The librarians and staff working for the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands have studied the particular needs of their libraries and ways to improve computer based service to the patrons of the islands. The most urgent needs are continued public access to computers and the ability to cooperate and to share information and services among libraries that are located on separate islands. The most practical way to fulfill these needs is through the creation and expansion of automated systems that will connect the libraries into a viable library network. The Five Year Plan can help the CNMI create a strong library system by addressing the following needs:

1. Patron information and technology needs can be met through the continuation and expansion of Information Technology Centers and staff to coordinate and develop library computer services.
2. Residents of all islands can gain access to a statewide-automated catalog by extending the Horizon system at Joeten-Kiyu Public Library to branch libraries on Tinian and Rota. Joeten-Kiyu is the central public library and headquarters of the CNMI State Library.
3. CNMI libraries, patrons, and staff can become less isolated through the creation of an improved CNMI Libraries Website that will allow remote access to the library network's catalog, better communication among the branches, and the sharing of library, educational, and cultural services.
4. Literacy programs and underserved patron groups can be better served through the extension of outreach programs that work with other educational and cultural agencies.
5. Service to CNMI library patrons can be improved by developing the information skills of library staff through continuing education and training.

Mission

To provide a variety of current information resources and materials to the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands and establish the library as a window to the outside world thereby reducing the intellectual isolation of our small island communities.

In pursuit of this mission the libraries of the CNMI will:

- Ensure that the people of the CNMI are given access to automated information services.
- Expand and improve services to all residents and people who have not traditionally used library services especially children, senior citizens, residents of remote islands and beginning readers.
- Engage the community and other organizations in enhancing lives through education and understanding Marianas culture, traditions and nature.

Need #1: *The continuation and improving of the library information technology centers at CNMI libraries through broadband service.*

Summary of Needs Assessment:

- The ITC at Joeten-Kiyu Public Library is currently the only computer facility on Saipan that allows for public access and serves the entire community of nearly 70,000.
- The heavily used ITC has over 1700 registered users plus a high number of visiting guests and it averages over 70 users per day with only 10 internet machines and a slow modem connection.
- Similarly heavy statistics are recorded for Tinian's ITC with only one shared dialup connection for 7 Internet computers; Rota has no ITC.
- Information and technology specialists are needed to provide expertise to develop, coordinate and maintain all CNMI automated services as well as providing training for staff and patrons.

Goal: All CNMI libraries will have up-to-date public computer access services, facilities, and trained staff to oversee all future automated innovations.

LSTA Purpose: Assisting CNMI in the maintaining and upgrading of its current computer services and the creation of new ones; helping the libraries acquire information and telecommunication technologies for staff and patrons.

Key Output Targets:

- Increase from two to three the number of CNMI islands with libraries connected to the internet.
- All CNMI libraries will have at least one staff member with advanced ITC training and skills by 2006.
- Continued functioning of library ITCs through 2007 including upgrading and maintenance of equipment and implementing new services.
- Broadband connections made available in all 3 libraries by 2004, increasing quality and desirability of Internet access.

Key Outcome Targets:

- ▲ An increase of 100% in the number of patrons registered to use ITC facilities.
- ▲ Renewed patron interest in the library and the new computer services it will provide.
- ▲ Increase the amount of information and variety of sites patrons can access during a given session.

Program:

1. Continue to employ an ITC coordinator. *Time Frame: Continually 2003-2007*
2. Contract an ISP provider to provide broadband Internet services. *Time Frame: 2003-2007*
3. Publicize availability of the new service and encourage an increase in online use at ITCs. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*
4. Provide ITC training for staff and weekly computer classes for patrons. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*

Need #2: *Provide CNMI residents greater access to library collections and inter-library services through the creation of an automated library network.*

Summary of Needs Assessment:

- The state library on Saipan has only recently replaced its card catalog and manual circulation with an operational online system. This system requires improvement to allow copy cataloging and connectivity to other CNMI libraries and the Internet.
- The branch library on Tinian does not have a complete online catalog and still has to rely on a shelf list and manual circulation system. The branch library on Rota currently has no catalog system in place. Library staff and residents are years behind most statewide systems in the automation of their catalogs.
- CNMI libraries are unable to share information electronically about the collections that exist at each island library. The CNMI has yet to link its member libraries into a common network and there is no automated system to allow for sharing of bibliographic records or automated interlibrary loan services.

Goal: Improve and expand CNMI library and patron services by allowing access to a network of library catalogs, information sources and services.

LSTA Purpose: The establishment of a statewide network to link all CNMI libraries electronically and improve access to collections and services.

Key Output Targets:

- Within two years the 3 libraries will be connected and capable of using the online Horizon catalog that currently holds the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library collection and the Borja Collection of the Northern Marianas College.
- Within two years all libraries will have the capacity to store their catalog holdings in a centralized database of over 50,000 items with a broadband high-speed connection to all CNMI libraries.

Key Outcome Targets:

- ▲ Increase of 75% or more of the number of interlibrary loan requests that will be generated and filled.
- ▲ The CNMI public will have access to 100% of all circulating public library materials and standardized bibliographic records, regardless of location.
- ▲ Increase statewide circulation by 20% through collection development that will create more highly circulating and relevant collections at each CNMI library after studies of patron usage and information requests on the new network.

Program:

1. Contract ISP service for broadband services and equipment linking all three libraries through a dedicated connection. *Time Frame: 2004-2007*
5. Provide continuing training for staff at each library location in use of new equipment, software and cataloging procedures. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*
3. Encourage public use and awareness of catalog. *Time Frame: 2003-2007 as catalog becomes available at each location*
5. Convert current manual library catalogs on Tinian and Rota to online Horizon system. *Time Frame: 2003-2005*
6. Gather statistics of patron usage and requests for studies to develop future services and library collections. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*

Need #3: *Reducing the isolation of each island's service area by creating a CNMI Libraries Website and email system that will allow for further sharing of library services, remote patron access to the library network's catalog and the digitizing of the CNMI system's Pacific Collection.*

Summary of Needs Assessment:

- There is Internet access to other government services but no remote access to any CNMI catalog or library service.
- The library on Saipan has a website that needs to be updated and expanded to include other CNMI Libraries and patron access to all library catalogs and services.
- No dedicated system of CNMI Library email exists for communication between branches or for patron reference queries.
- There have been no unifying elements or projects to create cohesion among the CNMI libraries.
- There is no Internet access to the libraries' most recognizable, relevant and heavily used Pacific reference materials or other cultural institutions such as the CNMI museum.

- No virtual web interaction between the library and other educational and cultural institutions such as the CNMI Museum, college or public schools.

Goal: Strengthen the profile and interoperation of the CNMI library system through the creation of an accessible website and a dedicated system of online communication.

LSTA Purpose: Forming a website representing and uniting all CNMI libraries and creating an online communications base to strengthen the library system.

Key Output Targets:

- Website will become operational by 2004 and contain information about all three libraries, services and Pacific collections; it will be linked to the CNMI network catalog within six months after the completion of the catalog.
- By 2005 the CNMI libraries will have a dedicated system of communication and online interaction for staff and patrons.
- Staff from all CNMI libraries will work together to create an online bibliography of over 1,000 Pacific Islands related titles and exhibits and develop uniform standards of library service by 2006.
- By 2006, publicity will make all CNMI schools aware of the digitized CNMI collection and a library made CD-ROM will be distributed to every school and key cultural organizations.

Key Outcome Targets:

- ▲ Web access to the CNMI libraries site will create greater awareness of the libraries and experience a yearly increase of 20% in the number of users who access our website, catalogs and online services.
- ▲ Website will become a key tool for library staff use as well as being accessible virtually anywhere by 2005.
- ▲ By 2006 library staff from the 3 libraries will develop a closer working relationship, improve their information technology skills and develop uniform standards of library service.
- ▲ Patrons will have remote access to the Pacific Collection and one new media based program per year due to initiation of interaction among CNMI libraries.
- ▲ The online Pacific Collection will be used by all CNMI schools and at least three key cultural organizations to enhance curriculum and increase awareness of Native American residents to their own cultural heritage.

Program:

1. Create new domain for the CNMI Website, catalog, and email. *Time Frame: 2003-2004*

2. Create and host CNMI Libraries Website and continually update and improve its information content including database access and the Pacific Collection. *Time Frame: 2004-2007*
3. Integrate the website and catalog by providing a link to direct patrons into the catalog system. *Time Frame: 2004-2005*
4. Appoint an inter-island library liaison to coordinate joint projects and conduct regular workshops for staff development. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*
5. Publicize and launch website through CNMI statewide promotion and new user services including email reference and CD-ROMs for schools. *Time Frame: continually and as new services are ready 2004-2007*
6. Work with other institutions to make websites that are part of a greater CNMI cultural and educational consortium. *Time Frame: 2005-2007*
7. Evaluation of the website to determine usage, ease of use, and patron satisfaction. *Time Frame: annually 2005-2007*

Need #4: *Strengthening of the libraries outreach programs to schools, educational and cultural centers.*

Summary Needs Assessment:

- Library is the islands primary source for early educational read aloud story hours.
- There is no organized library program for outreach other than to Head Start.
- Lack of turnout to Summer Reading, juvenile and youth services in previous years.
- There are several underserved ESL, elderly, and other patron groups that have yet to make use of library services.

Goal: To make the library a pillar of resources and services for educational and cultural centers.

LSTA Purpose: Creating a regularly active outreach program working in conjunction with K-12 schools, adult literacy and cultural institutions.

Key Output Targets:

- The continuation and expansion of the Head Start Reading Program to all CNMI schools by 2007.
- Expand reading program to one after school community and one government run summer youth center by 2005.
- By 2003 the creation of an outreach program between CNMI libraries and senior citizens centers.

- One new outreach program per year that will work with another agency to target a new group of underserved patrons.

Key Outcome Targets:

- ▲ 100% of all Head Start students will be read to once a month.
- ▲ 50% of senior citizens who have been denied access to library and computer services will take part in outreach classes at the Manamko Aging Center.
- ▲ Students attending after school and summer programs will have a story hour by 2005.
- ▲ The number of different educational and cultural institutions working with the library will increase 150% by 2007.

Program:

1. Continuation and expansion of Head Start Reading Programs throughout the CNMI. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*
2. Creation of an outreach service to Manamko Aging Centers to teach library services and computer use to the elderly. *Time Frame: 2003-2004*
3. Schedule regular workshops or meetings with schools, literacy programs and cultural centers to develop new out reach programs. *Time Frame: annually 2003-2007*
4. Work with other youth programs, community centers, and government agencies to create after school and summer reading programs. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*

Need #5: *Service to CNMI library patrons can be improved by developing the skills and knowledge of library staff through continuing education and training.*

Summary Needs Assessment:

- Staff in the CNMI libraries do not have adequate Library Science education or training; there are only two professionals in the system with MLS degrees.
- Educational opportunity is limited do to geographical difficulties and there is not a single local native inhabitant with an MLS; the nearest ALA accredited library school is in Hawaii.
- The CNMI has had a high turnover of librarians and library directors leaving a disjointed transition of ideas and development.
- Training is needed to insure the staff is capable of keeping abreast of technological advances and to introduce them to recent trends in library services.

Goal: Library staff will be offered education and training in the fields of library science and technology.

LSTA Purpose: Staffing the CNMI library system with the most capable and knowledgeable personnel and locals with a vested interest in the community and library.

Key Output Targets:

- By the end of 2007 75% of all library professionals will have a bachelor's degree or MLS.
- Grants and training and educational spending will be awarded for library science programs 2003-2007.

Key Outcome Targets:

- ▲ Library staff will deliver more satisfactory library and reference services and increase in-house use of the library by 30%.
- ▲ The presence of native islanders in professional service roles will increase local patron use of the library by Chamorro and Carolinian patrons by 20%.
- ▲ The employment of staff with vested interest in the islands and their community will decrease the problem of staff turnover.

Program:

1. Pursue professional education and training of staff through competitive grants and other means. *Time Frame: annually 2003-2007*
2. Provide continuing education and training of non-MLS staff through staff development activities. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*
3. Coordinate with University of Hawaii, Moana Campus to pursue Library Science classes and education for library staff, especially native Americans. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*
4. Encourage the creation of community college level library courses at the Northern Marianas College. *Time Frame: 2004-2007*
5. Have key staff members to pursue an MLS or library science classes at an accredited school. *Time Frame: continually 2003-2007*

Summary of Planning and Implementation Procedures

The following summarizes the stakeholder involvement, communication and monitoring procedures which the Joeten-Kiyu Library put into place for the development, finalization and implementation of this Five Year State Plan.

Stakeholder Involvement Procedures

Staff representing the library information technology centers, branch libraries, and children's services worked together to address different library and community needs. Key members of a variety of educational and cultural agencies were consulted to aid in the drafting of the five-year plan. The members represented the Library Council, Public School System, Northern Marianas College, Adult Literacy Agencies, the Museum and Humanities Council, and worked to verify the relevance of the plan to the CNMI's educational and cultural programs and interests. These members represent the groups who will be consulted to implement specific LSTA and supporting programs.

Communication Procedures

A final copy of the State Plan will be posted on our state libraries website and will be updated to include any future revisions. Key achievements and milestones will be added to the website, reported, and publicized. Drafts of the Five Year State Plan, reports, and surveys for evaluation will be presented to the members of the participating agencies for periodic review. A forum will be created for email correspondence via the libraries website to share ideas which will contribute to any future planning or assessment. Any future planning will be done only with the participation of the library and key stakeholders. Any significant changes to the Five Year Plan will be submitted to IMLS and stakeholders. Additional means appropriate to the needs of stakeholders may also be employed including, meetings, visits, presentations or printed reports keeping all parties interested and informed.

Monitoring Procedures

The CNMI libraries will assign staff presenting different libraries and areas of library service to continually administer, monitor, and document the implementation of the Plan. The procedures will include the monitoring of all projects which are funded under the LSTA program. In addition to quarterly and annual reports and outcome based evaluations, staff from the State Library will conduct monitoring visits for each project. Any necessary corrective actions will be decided on in collaboration with sub-grantees and any appropriate participating parties.